**Guidelines for Qualifying Exam**

These guidelines are provided to maintain some degree of uniformity between the different areas of the Department while allowing them also some flexibility.

1. The qualifying exam shall consist of both a written and an oral component. The written component should include an essay type question asking the candidate to write, for example, about technical or research developments in the field. This question is intended to judge the ability to communicate in writing. The other questions will be intended to judge the understanding of basic material, graduate or undergraduate, at the graduate level. The decision of whether to use only undergraduate material or also graduate Master’s level material is left at the discretion of each area.

2. The qualifying exam should be administered twice a year, preferably at the end of each semester. All students taking the exam on a given semester will take the written portion at the same time. Each area may select each year a committee to administer the exam. Once the written questions are prepared the faculty in the area should meet to discuss the questions. The oral exam should be administered no later than 2 weeks after the written exam unless there are special circumstances. The oral may be used to probe further into some of the questions in the written part, to explore breadth or depth of knowledge, and to assess oral communication skills.

3. The results of the written exam may be:
   a) Fail, last chance if failed previously.
   b) Fail, can be retaken again the next time it is offered.
   c) Pass. Take the oral

4. The results of the total exam, after taking the oral may be:
   a) Fail, last chance if failed previously. If the student fails the exam twice the student must leave the Zachry Department of Civil Engineering’s Ph.D. program and will not be readmitted to any other Ph.D. program within the department. The student cannot enter the Doctor of Engineering program. The student cannot enter an interdisciplinary department as a Ph.D. student if their chair is in the Zachry Department of Civil Engineering.
   b) Fail, can be retaken again the next time it is offered.
   c) Conditional Pass with requirements to take technical or English courses and pass them, if the committee feels that the candidate is deficient in some areas but otherwise qualified.
   d) Unconditional Pass.

5. It would be desirable to have all the area faculty meet after the exam to learn about the results.

6. Students trying to get a Ph. D. should satisfy the language proficiency requirements before taking the Qualifying exam. These are: 600 or more on the TOEFL, 70 or more in the English language Proficiency Examination (ELPE), or a grade of at least B in the English Language Institute (ELI) courses at the 300 level or higher.

7. Students accepted to the Ph. D. program should normally take the exam at the end of their first semester here. If they have to take English courses before due to the language proficiency requirement, or other remedial courses in the estimation of their advisor, they will be allowed to postpone it, normally by one semester. They must have satisfied the language requirement by then.